

Memories

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Summary: [OneShot] When a New Feather that looks exactly like Reki is born, Rakka reflects on everything that was never said between them.

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****Memory**

> by Kurama-Sweethart

> Words: 1443

> Summary: When a New Feather that looks exactly like Reki is born, Rakka reflects on everything that was never said between them.

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>How long had it been? Rakka couldn't remember, even though she had written it down on an old, yellowed sheet of parchment that Nemu had given her. It was stuffed in a drawer somewhere, and after every Passing of the Year Celebration, she'd mark another tally with her pen next to Reki's name. She remembered that there were seven next to Kuu, three next to Kana's name, and Hikari's would have one next year. <p>She never told anyone about the parchment. Maybe, when her own Day of Flight came, she could tell Nemu so that no one would forget her, either. But she didn't think Nemu would be left last. Nemu was the oldest, after all. She didn't deserve to have to stay at Old Home, alone.<p>

The Twins had long since left Old Home. It was surprising that their Flight had come before their first year; but as long as they went together, Rakka thought, that was the best thing. Those two were the most adorable Young Feathers, always running and playing in the courtyard. She missed them, sometimes, while she worked for the Haibane Renmei. But she was happy for them, too, that they had found their own paradise so soon.

But there was something else to be concerned with now, Rakka mused, gazing at the sprout poking through the tiles of the broom closet.

She leaned down on her hands and knees, to get a closer look.

"What are you looking at, Rakka?" Nemu yawned from the doorway, leaning against the broom in her hands. "Drop something?"

Rakka shook her head and waved at her. "No, I think it's a new cocoon! Come see!"

Intrigued, Nemu stepped from the doorway and shuffled over, crouching down and squinting. "It's pretty small! It has to be brand-new!"

"Yeah. And look at how pale it is." Rakka murmured, frowning. "Is there something we can do to help it?"

Nemu bit the inside of her cheek. "If the New Feather can't survive on her own, then it's her place to die. We just have to make sure all the other kids don't find it here-"

"Whatcha lookin' at?" Asked Shui, suddenly appearing at the door. She was a loud-mouthed kid who was born just after the Twins. "Is it a new cocoon?"

Both Rakka and Nemu stood up, shooing her out and closing the door. "Yes, but leave it alone, okay? We have to make sure to keep it healthy!"

Shui agreed and skipped off down the hall, already preoccupied with catching up to her friends. "You've got quite a different approach at keeping them out than Reki!" Nemu teased, bumping Rakka with her hip. "They seem to listen when you don't fling curses at them!"

"Yeah," Rakka agreed, shoving Nemu back. "So how long do you think it'll take for the Haibane in the cocoon to hatch?"

Nemu smiled, shrugging. "Depends. If she's strong, she'll emerge within a week. If not, she might take a good month before finally hatching."

"I hope she hatches soon." Rakka decided thoughtfully. "I can't wait to meet her!"

Putting her broom away and heading towards her room, Nemu agreed. "Especially since you're going to be her senior."

"Really?" Rakka asked hopefully, grinning.

"Well," Nemu continued, "You were born before me."

* * *

>As the days passed, Rakka checked in on the cocoon every night before she went to her room for bed. It grew quickly, tall and full and wet, until finally it took up practically the whole room. Rakka remembered Reki and the others telling her that her cocoon had been that big, too, and she hoped that it was a good sign. <p>Close to ten days after discovering the small sprout, Nemu and Rakka found themselves confronted with a cold, unconscious and very naked Haibane, slumped on the tile floor.

"You've hatched!" Rakka greeted, trying to dry the girl from the mucus that lined the cocoon. She had long, dark hair that splayed over her back in locks. "And we weren't here to see it!"

Nemu wrapped the New Feather in a towel, helping her to stand. She shook her, but the New Feather was obviously unconscious. "Probably from shock. Lets get her out of here." Pause. "She looks a lot like Reki."

"Oh, yeah." Rakka agreed numbly, taking the New Feather's arm. "Let's take her to my room, it's closer." Between the two of them, Rakka and Nemu were able to carry the girl to the bed without much strain.

"Rakka," Nemu asked suddenly, covering the new Haibane in blankets. "Do you have any extra clothes she could use?"

Nodding, Rakka pulled out a plain, blue dress and helped Nemu dress the New Feather. "Well, I guess now all we can do is wait."

Luckily, they didn't have to wait long.

"Where am I?" Asked the Reki-look alike, rubbing her eyes. "I don't remember-"

Smiling kindly, Nemu sat on the side of the bed, stroking hair from her face. "You don't remember anything, about your dreamâ€|?"

"I remember-" She began, glancing up at Rakka suddenly. "Who are you?"

Said-Haibane pointed to herself. "Me? I'm Rakkaâ€| It means 'Falling'. I got my name becauseâ€| because in my cocoon dream, I was falling, I-"

"Oh. Well, you looked familiar, that's all." The Reki-look alike said, looking down at her hands. "I rememberâ€| I was walking along the bank of a clear stream, watching the water run over the little stonesâ€|"

Rakka froze. "Little stones?" Nemu ignored her, still looking at the New Feather kindly.

"It's custom here for new Haibane to be named for their cocoon dream." She began. "A clear streamâ€| 'Kiyoko' means clear."

The New Feather nodded her head slightly. "I like Kiyoko."

"Then it's settled!" Nemu chirped happily, yawning. "It's late, so I'm going to go to bed, now. I'm Nemu by the way."

Kiyoko nodded. "Yeah. Nice to meet you, Nemu."

* * *

>That night Rakka sat up by the New Feather's bed, watching her sleep peacefully. It was breathtaking, the way she looked just like Reki, and she found herself combing her fingers through the thick, dark hair that seemed so familiar. "I'm happy you're here." She whispered, gazing through the open window at the moonlight pouring in. "I'm glad

that Reki finally found her salvation, but I miss her sometimes. Having you here is likeâ€¦ like having her here, too. And it's a nice, warm feeling, familiar, too, like how almost seven years ago, I'd awake to Reki, leaning over me, smiling. She always took care of me, and now it's my turn to repay her." <p>Rakka stroked the New Feather's cheeks. "Even now, I sometimes forget she's gone. I keep forgetting to call you Kiyoko, like Nemu said, instead of Reki. I know you don't know who Reki is, but she was amazing and kind and lost, but she finally found her way to her Flight. I hope to someday see her again, when I have my own Flight. Maybe you'll get to meet her, too."<p>

The New Feather smiled in her sleep, and Rakka couldn't resist mirroring the sentiment. "Tomorrow your wings will probably grow in. It hurts a lot, but I'll be here for you. Make sure that you try to think of other things, like warm-sugar donuts down at the Bakery where Hikari used to work. We'll have to go there someday, once you've started working, and buy a box to bring back for the Young Feathers and Nemu."

There was a long silence, until finally Rakka spoke again. "I'm sorry, Reki." She choked, but it wasn't a sad or unhappy sob- it was happy. "There were so many things I wanted to share with you, so many things I wanted to tell you. But you were so lost and everything went by so fast and then you were gone."

Feeling stupid and childish, Rakka pawed at her tearing eyes. "I did love you, you know. You were the only one who even really bothered to get to know me. I know you thought that you were doing it selfishly, but even now that I know everything; I can't believe that you did all those things just for yourself. You had to haveâ€¦ compassion. You were a good person, Reki, and I love you. I did love you, I do love you, and I always will."

Lightly, Rakka brushed her lips across the New Feather's temple. "Well, good night, Kiyoko. You have a big day ahead of you." She said, creeping into the guest room to sleep, not bothering to shut the door behind her.

Groggily, the New Feather opened one eye, watching the way Rakka's wings disappeared into the twilight. "I love you, too."

* * *

>End.

Written on a whim after watching the last episode for the upteenth time. Just the exchange between Rakka and Reki that should-have-been.

End
file.